

Dear Parents,

The recent media coverage surrounding the purchase of law enforcement rifles by the Fontana Unified School District Police Department has generated many questions. It is my hope to answer most of the questions in this written communication. Despite my best effort, I am certain questions will still exist. As a result, I encourage any member of the community to feel welcome to contact me for further clarification. I can be reached by telephone (909)357-7600 extension 29065, or by email at billy.green@fUSD.net.

Are weapons stored at various school sites throughout the district?

The policy which addresses law enforcement rifles is comprehensive and supervisors ensure the policy is adhered to. When officers are off-duty, the rifles are stored at the police department in a vault. The vault is monitored by a school police employee 24 hours a day. When a trained and authorized officer begins his or her shift, they follow a check-out procedure and immediately place the rifle into a case. The case is then secured in the police officer's car and they go about their duty during the course of their shift. At the end of their shift, the officer follows a check-in procedure and the rifle is returned to the vault.

In an effort to be as transparent as possible, it should be noted that officers assigned to a high school campus may secure the rifle in their office safe, **only while the officer is present at the school site**. Furthermore, the officer is the only person with the combination to the safe. The reason for this is because high school campuses are large and based on the parking limitations, officers may be required to park their police cars several hundred yards from their office. In the event of an emergency, it is not tactically sound for an officer to be required to leave a school site, respond to the parking lot to retrieve their rifle, and then return to the location of the emergency.

Is there a specific identified threat to the Fontana Unified School District?

There is not a specific identified threat to any of our campuses. However, it is my responsibility to analyze crime trends and violence related issues across the nation and forecast potential threats to our students and staff members. I would be negligent in my responsibilities if I were to ignore the fact that there have been 29 school shootings, which have resulted in 59 deaths-all since 2010. The areas of concern are broad and are not focused solely on school shootings. For example, bullying and adolescent exposure to violence on television, movies, video games, and music are also concerning and we are collaborating on strategies to mitigate the negative influences on our children.

Why wasn't the money spent on the rifles used to reinstate the school counselor program?

The money used to purchase the rifles was generated by the district's school police services department. Furthermore, the total cost for the rifles was approximately \$14,000, which would not come close to paying the salary for even one school counselor.

Are our kids going to be seeing officers walking around their campuses with these rifles?

There are very strict guidelines which mandate when an officer may deploy with the rifle. If not deployed for a tactical reason, they are contained in a case. However, if there is an intruder on your child's campus or an identified clear and present lethal danger at a school site, your child may see the officer's rifle.

Why do officers need these rifles? Don't they already have handguns?

Officers are already equipped with handguns while carrying out their mission of safeguarding school sites. The rifles are needed to provide the officers with the tools necessary to respond to a school site in the event of an active shooter or other situation which greatly jeopardizes the safety of children and staff. In planning for our response to an active shooter on your child's campus, the law enforcement rifle provides the officer with a greater ability to resolve the emergency in the most expeditious manner possible. In the event of an active shooter, every second counts. The law enforcement rifle is a tool which provides officers increased accuracy, increased stopping power, enhances the distance in which an officer can eliminate a threat to your child's life.

I appreciate your time in reading this communication. As previously stated, I hope it served to answer the majority of your questions surrounding this topic. The men and women of the Fontana Unified School District Police Services Department are honored to serve your children, their teachers, and you as parents. I pray you find comfort in the knowledge that every man and woman in this department would, without hesitation, place themselves between your child and anyone intending to cause them harm.

It is unfortunate indeed that those tasked with protecting your children and their teachers must plan a response for such ugly and unspeakable events. It is our hope that these tools are never needed, but those of us tasked with emergency planning would be irresponsible and derelict if we ignored the possibility.

Respectfully,

Billy Green
Chief
Fontana Unified School District Police Services